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## For Immediate Release

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### **Federal Cuts Prompt Agency to Schedule Phone Applications for Unemployment**

SPOKANE – Beginning Monday, Nov. 18, Social Security numbers will determine the day of the week that laid-off workers in selected cities and towns can apply for unemployment benefits by phone, the Washington State Employment Security Department announced today.

All of Eastern Washington will be affected, as will Bellingham, Port Angeles and 16 small towns outlying those two cities. No one's unemployment check will be delayed by the change, because eligibility for benefits is based on the week an application is made, not the day it is made. If this change works well in these areas, it will be implemented statewide this winter.

Unemployment applicants with Social Security numbers ending in digits 0 to 3 must call on Mondays; digits 4 to 7 on Tuesdays, and digits 8 or 9 on Wednesdays. Anyone who misses his or her designated day can call on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday of the same week without experiencing any delay in payment.

"We're encouraging everyone with Internet access to apply for unemployment online at [www.go2ui.com](http://www.go2ui.com), because anyone can do that at any time on any day of the week," says Employment Security Commissioner Sylvia Mundy. "We intend to keep service quality high for customers, in spite of the cuts we've sustained. The [go2ui.com](http://www.go2ui.com) website and call scheduling will help us do that."

A \$14 million federal cut to administrative funding for the state's unemployment program, plus a stubbornly high jobless rate, prompted the move to schedule calls. The goal is to reduce time on hold for customers and to increase efficiency by spreading calls evenly over the week. This allows a limited number of claims takers to handle a growing number of unemployment applications during the winter months.

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